

THE MEN OF THE NINETIES

launch on the English publishing market the released Wilde's now famous *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. If he did exceed certain rules for himself, he at least took risks to help others. He was no supine battener on the profits of books for young ladies' seminaries. He was a printer, and his bankruptcy may be said to have closed the period.

Lastly in this chaunt of omissions comes the drama of the nineties. Unfortunately the drama, in so far as it affects the group of the nineties with which we are concerned, is almost a nullity. Aubrey Beardsley once commenced a play, which was never heard of, in collaboration with Brandon Thomas. Ernest Dowson wrote what Beardsley called a 'tiresome' playlet. John Davidson perpetrated a number of plays such as *Bruce* (1886), *Smith, a tragic farce* (1888), *Scaramouch in Navos*, and two other plays in 1889 when he was feeling his way, and translated much later as hackwork a play of François Coppée's and Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas*. Theodore Peters' pastoral and other similar trifles only go to show how barren the group itself was in the dramatist's talent. Nor can much be said for such poetic plays as Theodore Wratishaw's *The Pity of Love*.